

**CLAIMS**

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1. A method for a recipient to receive an email having rights management (RM) protected content therein, the protected content being encrypted and decryptable according to a content key (KD), the content key (KD) being found in a corresponding license, the method comprising:

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receiving the email while connectively coupled to a network through which the email may be obtained;

recognizing that the received email has the protected content therein; and

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obtaining the license for the protected content of the email from an RM server while still connectively coupled to the network and in response to receiving the email and recognizing the protected content therein, such obtaining being performed in an automatic manner,

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whereby the license is available to the recipient even when such recipient is not connectively coupled to the RM server by way of the network at a later time.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein such obtaining is performed in a manner transparent to the recipient of the email

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3. The method of claim 1 wherein obtaining the license comprises:

placing a representation of the received email with the protected content therein into a queue;

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retrieving the representation of the received email from the queue; and

requesting the license for the protected content of the retrieved email from the RM server.

4. The method of claim 3 further comprising, if the RM server fails to respond to the request for the license:

noting the RM server in a bad server list;

5 wherein requesting the license comprises requesting such license for the protected content of the retrieved email from the RM server if the RM server is not noted on the bad server list.

10 5. The method of claim 4 further comprising, if the RM server fails to respond to the request for the license:

placing the representation of the email back into the queue;

again requesting such license for the protected content of the retrieved email from the RM server if the RM server is not noted on the bad server list.

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6. The method of claim 4 further comprising removing the noted RM server from the bad server list after a period of time.

20 7. A method for a recipient to receive rights management (RM) protected content, the protected content being encrypted and decryptable according to a content key (KD), the content key (KD) being found in a corresponding license, the method comprising:

receiving the protected content while connectively coupled to a network through which the protected content may be obtained;

25 recognizing that the received protected content is in fact protected content; and

obtaining the license for the protected content from an RM server while still connectively coupled to the network and in response to receiving the email and recognizing the protected content as protected content, such  
30 obtaining being performed in an automatic manner,

whereby the license is available to the recipient even when such recipient is not connectively coupled to the RM server by way of the network at a later time.

5                   8.     The method of claim 7 wherein such obtaining is performed in a manner transparent to the recipient of the email

                  9.     The method of claim 7 wherein obtaining the license comprises:  
10                   placing a representation of the received protected content into a queue;  
                  retrieving the representation of the received protected content from the queue; and  
                  requesting the license for the protected content from the RM  
15     server.

                  10.    The method of claim 9 further comprising, if the RM server fails to respond to the request for the license:  
                  noting the RM server in a bad server list;  
20                   wherein requesting the license comprises requesting such license for the protected content from the RM server if the RM server is not noted on the bad server list.

                  11.    The method of claim 10 further comprising, if the RM server  
25     fails to respond to the request for the license:  
                  placing the representation of the protected content back into the queue;  
                  again requesting such license for the protected content from the RM server if the RM server is not noted on the bad server list.

30                   12.    The method of claim 10 further comprising removing the noted RM server from the bad server list after a period of time.

13. A computer-readable medium having stored thereon computer-executable instructions for performing a method for a recipient to receive an email having rights management (RM) protected content therein, the protected content being encrypted and decryptable according to a content key (KD), the content key (KD) being found in a corresponding license, the method comprising:
- receiving the email while connectively coupled to a network through which the email may be obtained;
- 10 recognizing that the received email has the protected content therein; and
- obtaining the license for the protected content of the email from an RM server while still connectively coupled to the network and in response to receiving the email and recognizing the protected content therein, such
- 15 obtaining being performed in an automatic manner,
- whereby the license is available to the recipient even when such recipient is not connectively coupled to the RM server by way of the network at a later time.
- 20 14. The medium of claim 13 wherein such obtaining is performed in a manner transparent to the recipient of the email
15. The medium of claim 13 wherein obtaining the license comprises:
- 25 placing a representation of the received email with the protected content therein into a queue;
- retrieving the representation of the received email from the queue; and
- requesting the license for the protected content of the
- 30 retrieved email from the RM server.

16. The medium of claim 15 wherein the method further comprises, if the RM server fails to respond to the request for the license:  
noting the RM server in a bad server list;  
wherein requesting the license comprises requesting such  
5 license for the protected content of the retrieved email from the RM server if the RM server is not noted on the bad server list.

17. The medium of claim 16 wherein the method further comprises, if the RM server fails to respond to the request for the license:  
10 placing the representation of the email back into the queue;  
again requesting such license for the protected content of the retrieved email from the RM server if the RM server is not noted on the bad server list.

18. The medium of claim 16 wherein the method further comprises removing the noted RM server from the bad server list after a period of  
15 time.

19. A computer-readable medium having stored thereon  
20 computer-executable instructions for performing a method for a recipient to receive rights management (RM) protected content, the protected content being encrypted and decryptable according to a content key (KD), the content key (KD) being found in a corresponding license, the method comprising:  
receiving the protected content while connectively coupled to  
25 a network through which the protected content may be obtained;  
recognizing that the received protected content is in fact protected content; and  
obtaining the license for the protected content from an RM server while still connectively coupled to the network and in response to receiving  
30 the email and recognizing the protected content as protected content, such obtaining being performed in an automatic manner,

whereby the license is available to the recipient even when such recipient is not connectively coupled to the RM server by way of the network at a later time.

5                   20.   The medium of claim 19 wherein such obtaining is performed in a manner transparent to the recipient of the email

                  21.   The medium of claim 19 wherein obtaining the license comprises:  
10                   placing a representation of the received protected content into a queue;  
                  retrieving the representation of the received protected content from the queue; and  
                  requesting the license for the protected content from the RM  
15   server.

                  22.   The medium of claim 21 wherein the method further comprises, if the RM server fails to respond to the request for the license:  
                  noting the RM server in a bad server list;  
20                   wherein requesting the license comprises requesting such license for the protected content from the RM server if the RM server is not noted on the bad server list.

                  23.   The medium of claim 22 wherein the method further  
25   comprises, if the RM server fails to respond to the request for the license:  
                  placing the representation of the protected content back into the queue;  
                  again requesting such license for the protected content from the RM server if the RM server is not noted on the bad server list.

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24. The medium of claim 22 wherein the method further comprises removing the noted RM server from the bad server list after a period of time.